In the Amended Claims of the International Preliminary Examination Report dated August 17, 2001 (copy enclosed), please amend the Claims to read as follows (a copy of the amended claims showing the additions and deletions appears at the end for the Examiner's convenience):

3. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 1, wherein the protein containing the 7 Cys-knot region of the TGF-β superfamily protects against neurodegenerative events.

6. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid comprises at least the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 7A or the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A or nucleotides 40 to 333 of the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A or mutants thereof leading to the expression of functionally active polypeptides.

7. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 1, wherein the protein encoded by the nucleic acid comprises at least the primary amino acid sequence shown in Fig. 7B or the primary amino acid sequence shown in Fig. 8B or amino acid residues 14 to 111 of the sequence shown in Fig. 8B as well

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as homologs thereof having conservative amino acid substitutions.

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8. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 1, wherein the mammal is a human.

9. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 1, wherein the neurodegenerative disorders are selected from the group of acute and/or chronic neurological and psychological disorders.

12. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 1, further comprising one or more agents having neurotrophic activity or functionally active derivatives or parts thereof.

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17. The diagnostic kit according to claim 15, wherein the protein containing the 7 Cys-knot region of the TGF-β superfamily protects against neurodegenerative events.

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20. The diagnostic kit according to claim 15, wherein the nucleic acid comprises at least the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 7A or the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A or nucleotides 40 to 333 of the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A or

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mutants thereof leading to the expression of functionally active polypeptides.

21. The diagnostic kit according to claim 15, wherein the protein encoded by the nucleic acid comprises at least the primary amino acid sequence shown in Fig. 7B or the primary amino acid sequence shown in Fig. 8B or amino acid residues 14 to 111 of the sequence shown in Fig. 8B as well as homologs thereof having conservative amino acid substitutions.

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22. The diagnostic kit according to claim 19, wherein the mammal is a human.

Please add the following new claims 23-26:

23. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 2, wherein the protein containing the 7 Cys-knot region of the TGF-β superfamily protects against neurodegenerative events.

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24. The diagnostic kit according to claim 16, wherein the protein containing the 7 Cys-knot region of the TGF-β superfamily protects against neurodegenerative events.

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25. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 2, wherein:

the protein containing the 7 Cys-knot region of the TGF-β superfamily protects against neurodegenerative events;

the neurodegenerative event is mediated by oxidative damage and/or free radical damage and/or mediators and/or executors of neuronal death programs;

the mediators of the free radical damage are selected from the group consisting of iron, NO donors, and other free radical donors, and the mediators and executors of neuronal death programs are selected from the group consisting of caspases and pro- and anti-apoptotic members of the bcl-2 family;

either the nucleic acid comprises at least the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 7A or the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A or nucleotides 40 to 333 of the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A or mutants thereof leading to the expression of functionally active polypeptides; or the protein encoded by the nucleic acid comprises at least the primary amino acid sequence shown in Fig. 7B or the primary amino acid sequence shown in Fig. 8B or amino acid residues 14 to 111 of the sequence shown in Fig. 8B as well as homologs thereof having conservative amino acid substitutions;

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the mammal is a human;

the neurodegenerative disorders are selected from the group of acute and/or chronic neurological and psychological disorders;

the neurological and psychological disorders are caused by stroke, parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, infections of the CNS and psychiatric disorders associated with disturbances in CNS transmitter systems;

the psychiatric disorders are selected from the group consisting of depression and schizophrenia;

the agent is a cytokine selected from the group consisting of GDF, GDNF, TGF, activins, BMP, BDNF, NGF, EGF, CNTF and FGF; and

further comprising one or more agents having neurotrophic activity or functionally active derivatives or parts thereof.

26. The diagnostic kit according to claim 16, wherein:

the protein containing the 7 Cys-knot region of the TGF-β superfamily protects against neurodegenerative events;

the neurodegenerative event is mediated by oxidative damage and/or free radical damage and/or mediators and/or executors of neuronal death programs;

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the mediators of the free radical damage are selected from the group consisting of iron, NO donors, and other free radical donors, and the mediators and executors of neuronal death programs are selected from the group consisting of caspases and pro- and anti-apoptotic members of the bcl-2 family;

wherein the nucleic acid comprises at least the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 7A or the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A or nucleotides 40 to 333 of the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A or mutants thereof leading to the expression of functionally active polypeptides;

the protein encoded by the nucleic acid comprises at least the primary amino acid sequence shown in Fig. 7B or the primary amino acid sequence shown in Fig. 8B or amino acid residues 14 to 111 of the sequence shown in Fig. 8B as well as homologs thereof having conservative amino acid substitutions; and

the mammal is a human.

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